

American Opinion Summary

Department of State

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1. MISSILE BASES: ITALY & TURKEY

Reliance on Polaris missiles instead of Jupiter missile bases in Italy and Turkey will probably strengthen Western defense. A number of editors agree (e.g., Christian Science Monitor, Wash. Star, Worcester Times). "There will simply be an exchange of a far better and up-to-date missile system for the obsolete Jupiter," the Monitor comments.

At least the move will not weaken the defense of the West, several suggest (e.g., St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Wash. Post, Time magazine). If the massive over-all strategic deterrent power of the U.S. "does not deter an attack, a handful of obsolescent Jupiter missiles based in Turkey and Italy will not do so," the Post-Dispatch asserts.

Some indicate that removal of the missiles may lessen U.S.-Soviet tension (e.g., Chicago News, St. Louis Post-Dispatch). As William H. Stringer puts it, "this removal of missiles standing on Turkish soil and pointing at the Soviet Union will lift an irritant from Soviet-American relations."

However, a few others interpret the bases removal as a surrender to Khrushchev's demands (e.g., Chicago Tribune, Rep. Marsha [R-Ohio]). The Chicago Tribune asserts that "Khrushchev is humored in all particulars and the 'new' NATO strategy of putting all the nuclear eggs in the Polaris basket is used as an excuse to cover up the cave-in."

Some suspect that it is part of a Kennedy-Khrushchev "deal" (e.g., Chicago Tribune, First Mayor David Schlesinger, Sen. Simpson (R-Wyo.)). "There is little doubt that a deal was made," the National Review Bulletin asserts.

2. CUBA

Reports of a Russian military "build-up" in Cuba arouse sharply conflicting reactions.

Some voice confidence in the President, accepting his denial that any new increase in Soviet offensive weapons has taken place on the island. Holding that "some of the Cuban build-up is a political build-up in Washington," the St. Louis Post-Dispatch declares that the President "proved ready to approach the brink of war when national security was involved" in October. Therefore, "why should anybody assume that he is negligent of national security now?"

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CUBA
(Cont'd.)

The Watertown Times concludes, "we all have confidence in the decisions of President Kennedy" and "we should all stand by the president's judgment" [similarly, Dem. Sens. Morse (Ore.) and Humphrey (Minn.)], but holds that the Russians in Cuba "certainly are there for some other purpose than getting exercise or building barracks."

Mr. Kennedy was "correct," says Sen. Buckley (Calif.), and apparently the Soviet did remove all offensive missiles from Cuba. But he adds that in the absence of an on-the-spot inspection, "it is true that no one can make that complete statement." Russia's "forced-draft fortification" of Cuba and the continuing presence of her troops "are scarcely unexpected and should be treated with calm in a conscious attempt to resist scare reaction," the Providence Journal maintains. But as a corollary, it adds, the government has a deep responsibility to keep Congress and the American people "fully and honestly informed" of developments in Cuba (similarly, Sen. Humphrey).

But some Congressional sources insist that the Soviet military base in Cuba continues to grow (e.g., Rep. Sand (R-Iv. Vt.) and Keating (N.Y.); Dem. Sens. Stearns (Miss.) and Symington (Mo.); Rep. Miller (R-N.Y.)). While sympathizing with "the reluctance of the administration to wash its Cuban laundry in public," the Cincinnati Enquirer asserts that anxiety over Cuba "was not banished" by the President's assurance that no new build-up is underway. The President's comments "should have settled the matter," says the Dayton Herald, but there remain question marks "because the public senses the whole story is not yet being told."

"Enough doubt has been raised," in an effort to justify investigation by "one responsible Congressional committee," several conclude (e.g., Hearst's Baltimore News Post, Nashua Star, Des Moines Register).

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